



May 20, 2014

House Energy and Technology Committee  
Lansing, Michigan

Re: HB 5205 – Definition of renewable energy

Dear Representatives,

The Michigan Environmental Council has been a strong advocate for efforts to transition to cleaner forms of energy. Since the passage of Public Act 295 in 2008 we have monitored implementation of our renewable energy standard and am proud to say it has worked extremely well. We have supported renewable energy in an effort to achieve three main goals:

- 1) Reduce our use of fossil fuels and the resulting greenhouse gas emissions which are contributing to climate change.
- 2) Move toward cleaner forms of energy which reduce harmful air emissions which impact public health and natural resources in Michigan.
- 3) Stabilize electricity costs through greater reliance on energy sources which do not rely on fuel costs and thus have long-term stable price structures.

HB 5205 is bad policy. Burning hazardous waste is not renewable energy and does not help further any of the goals that renewable energy standards are designed to achieve.

The bill adds to the definition of renewable energy “waste described in section 11514” of NREPA (page 10, line 10). Waste described in section 11514 is too hazardous to be placed in a solid waste landfill, and includes “regulated hazardous waste as defined in R 299.4104 of the Michigan administrative code”. Those regulations include 20 pages of hazardous wastes virtually impossible to decipher without a team of attorneys, and includes petroleum coke, solvents, waste oils, and industrial byproducts.

One of the main defects in our current energy markets is the failure of the system to account for the significant health care costs and damages associated with our over-reliance on coal-fired power plants. In 2009, the Michigan Environmental

Council commissioned a study to evaluate the health impacts of our nine oldest coal plants, which showed Michigan residents are incurring over \$1 billion annually in health care costs and damages related to air pollution from coal plants. This bill will just add to those health impacts. In some cases, the waste products included in HB 5205 are already being mixed with coal and burned in Michigan, and therefore are already contributing to health impacts within the state.

The definition of renewable energy should remain only those items that are ultimately derived from solar power, water power, or wind power over a human timeframe. Fuel sources that mix biomass with other materials derived from fossil fuels should only receive credit for the percentage of the fuel which comes from biomass.

We strongly urge committee members to oppose HB 5205.

Sincerely,



James Clift, Policy Director